Closure of Tourist Offices Abroad

2733. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) in what manner Government propose to make India a major tourism destination for the global visitors;

(b) how effectively the tourist offices abroad are facilitating tourist inflow to the country; and

(c) whether there is any plan to reduce the number of such offices in the future as it seems that there are more cheaper and effective ways of generating foreign tourist to the country ?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) To make India a major tourist destination for the global visitors, Government is publicising and promoting India through its 18 overseas tourist offices by advertising in print and electronic media, Public Relations, participating in travel fairs/exhibitions, brochure support to the travel trade, direct mailing, organising India evenings, India tourism website, CD ROM etc.

(b) The tourist arrivals have increased by 5.2% and foreign exchange increased by 3% (in INR) during 1999 over the corresponding period of 1998.

(c) Currently there are no plans to reduce the number of overseas tourist offices. Other cheaper and effective ways can supplement the efforts of the Tourist offices but can not substitute them.

Declaration of Tourism as Industry

2734. SARDAR BALWINDER SINGH BHUNDAR : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have announced tourism as industry;

(b) whether any Gazette notification has been issued; and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) At the request of Ministry of Tourism 25 States/UT Governments have announced tourism as Industry and 3 States have announced Hotels as Industry.